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Message Text

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12
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 FEA-01 AGRE-00 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05
L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15
STR-04 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01
/100 W
---------- 082154
R 101851Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7905
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 0263
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USDEL MTN GENEVA
USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, FR
SUBJECT: PROTECTIONIST PRESSURES IN FRANCE

PRIME MINISTER BARRE MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DECEMBER 9:

"WHILE THE GOVERNMENT IS ATTACHED TO INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION AND FREE TRADE, WITHOUT WHICH OUR COUNTRY WOULD REVERT TO THE LOW PRODUCTIVITY AND MEDIOCRE STANDARD OF LIVING OF 1930, IT WILL SEE THAT FREE TRADE DEVELOPS IN A FRAMEWORK OF RECIPROCITY NOT ONLY ON THE PART OF THE GREAT INDUSTRIAL POWERS, BUT ALSO ON THE PART OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WHO CANNOT INUNDATE THE EUROPEAN MARKET WHILE PROTECTING THEIR INDUSTRIES AND CLOSING THEIR INTERNAL MARKETS." WITH REGARD TO TEXTILES: "... CERTAIN MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN AT THE FRONTIER TO AVOID UNFAIR COMPETITION."

THE ABOVE STATEMENT HAS GIVEN RISE TO SPECULATION THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO INSTITUTE RE-STRAINTS ON IMPORTS. COMMENTATORS HAVE NOTED THE
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SUCCESS WITH WHICH ITALY AND THE U.K. HAVE OBTAINED

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TOLERANCE FROM THE EC, BUT HAVE ALSO NOTED THAT INDIRECT MEASURES, SUCH AS AUSTERITY, ALSO REDUCE THE DEMAND FOR IMPORTS. FRANCE'S PRINCIPAL CONCERNS ARE SHOES FROM ITALY, SPAIN, AND CHINA, TEXTILES FROM LDC'S AND STEEL FROM JAPAN. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THE GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED IMPORT RESTRAINTS OF A GENERAL NATURE, EXCEPT FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPORT DEPOSITS (DENIED BY GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN) ALTHOUGH THE GOF IS QUITE CAPABLE OF ACTING FIRST AND CONSULTING WITH BRUSSELS AFTERWARD. AFTER THE OPEC OIL PRICE DECISION WE ASSUME THE GOF WILL REVIEW ITS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROJECTIONS AND DRAW APPROPRIATE CONCLUSIONS.

EMBASSY CONTACTS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE PROFESS NOT TO KNOW OF ANY NEW PROTECTIONIST MEASURES BEING CONTEMPLATED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AT THE QUAI D'ORSAY STOUTLY DENIED THAT FRANCE HAS ANY INTENTIONS OF TAKING TRADE RESTRICTIVE ACTIONS. HE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT WITH BARRE.
RUSH

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TAGS: ETRD, FR, (BARRE, RAYMOND)
To: STATE
Type: TE
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